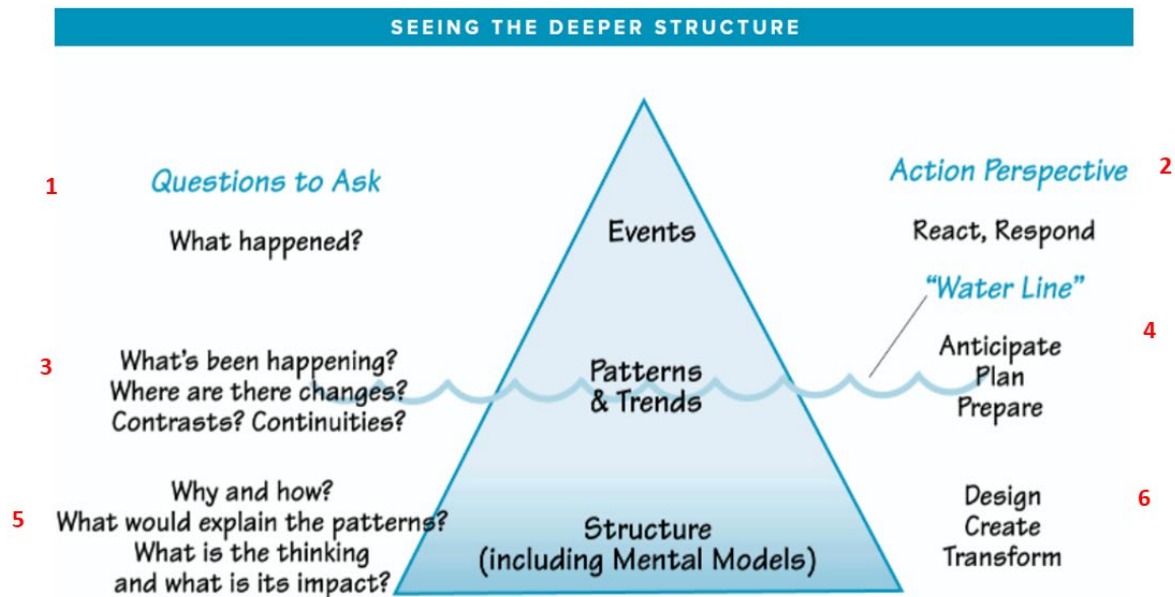


D459 Introduction to Systems Thinking

Iceberg Tool to Understand Patterns and Structure



Questions to Ask

1.Explain what happened in this case study.

A new director was hired to oversee medical-product design. Two department heads are experiencing a conflict regarding ordering components for the lab.

2.Explain how people reacted/responded to what happened.

Tasha submits purchase orders. Rodney tends to reject them in the name of controlling the budget. As a result, the lab is short of needed components and unable to do its work. Both managers seek the director's approval and are competing for a promotion.

3.Comparing the beginning of the case and the end, explain what changed and what continues the same.

The new director urged both managers to intensify their conflicting processes and suggests that one of them may "win" a promotion which the other would "lose." She also increases her attention to the budget.

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4. Given the case study, what would you anticipate will happen next? How could the involved parties plan or prepare for that?

Tasha and Rodney will escalate their dispute. The director will have to step in to resolve the problem. Each of these actors needs to see the bigger picture and their own roles within it. Ultimately, all three need to define the goal of the whole system (research) and how each of them needs to fulfill their parts within the system.

5. Explain the patterns you see in this case study, why they exist, and how they affect the system.

The main pattern is conflict between Tasha and Rodney, which could be personal in part but which also is based on inherently opposing goals in their respective roles. The lab manager, Tasha, must order supplies. The logistics manager, Rodney, must approve purchase orders and control the budget. The facts that both individuals focus on those roles alone and not the larger question of the purpose of the organization—to design new products—and that their director has not re-focused them on that purpose form a pattern of conflict.

6. Explain how you could design or create a solution to transform this system and address the problem?

The key to the solution here is for Dr. Forrester, Tasha, and Rodney to work together to bring the focus of the entire organization back to its fundamental purpose and to clarify how each person's role supports that purpose. Rather than competing or escalating their differences, these three need to become partners in managing the supply purchasing process.